



## Plans to renovate Union Station in Springfield clear environmental hurdle

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By **Peter Goonan, The Republican**



The Republican file | Mark M. Murray

The exterior of Union Station is seen on Frank Murray Street in downtown Springfield.

SPRINGFIELD – The city’s plans to rehabilitate and reopen **Union Station** reached another milestone last week with news that the Federal Transit Authority has ruled that the project poses no significant environmental harm.

The Federal Transit Authority ruled that its “Finding of No Significant Impact,” issued 12 years ago, was re-evaluated this year and the finding “remains valid” after design changes, said Mary Beth Mello, regional administrator for the federal agency.

That includes environmental issues such as air pollution and contaminants, and historical issues, city officials said.

The Union Station project is a two-phase, \$78 million rehabilitation of the historic property, including a \$48.6 million first-phase to restore the terminal building. The station, built in 1926 and closed since 1973, is located on Frank B. Murray Street.

“Step by step, we are getting closer to reality,” said Kevin M. Kennedy, the city’s chief development officer. “Come November, we will see the first phase evident when we begin the demolition process of the baggage building.”

Kennedy praised the cooperation of the Federal Transit Authority and Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the lead regulatory agencies.

“Both are working toward a common goal: a fully functional intermodal center at Union Station,” Kennedy said.

Christopher J. Moskal, executive director of the **Springfield Redevelopment Authority**, which owns Union Station, said there will be professional photographs taken of the baggage building prior to its demolition, that will be kept for historic purposes, as stipulated by the Federal Transit Authority.

With the issuance of the Finding of No Significant Impact, the redevelopment authority has complied with the National Environmental Policy Act for improvements for the project, Moskal said.

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno said it was "yet another critical milestone in the Union Station project moving forward."

Following demolition of the baggage building and an empty garage at 30 Frank B. Murray St., the city will begin renovations in the spring of 2013, and is scheduled to finish the first phase by late 2014, Moskal said.

The Springfield Redevelopment Authority has released an updated public Web site on the Union Station project that contains updated project details and information, archival articles and photographs and various external links. The Web site is: [www.springfield-ma.gov/unionstation](http://www.springfield-ma.gov/unionstation)

The site describes Phase 1 has including: the restoration of the terminal building and its central concourse; the demolition work and construction of a 24-bay bus terminal and a parking garage; the reopening of a passenger tunnel; and new stair and elevator access.

Phase 2 includes creating transit-related administrative functions, additional parking space, and development of transit-related commercial space.

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